

complaint and lamentation of Mistrisse Arden of
Essex in Kent, who for the loue of one *Mosbie*, hired certaine Ruffians
 Villaines most cruelly to murder her Husband, with the farall end of her and her
 Associates.
 To the tune of, *Fortune my Fee.*



As me, vile wretch, that ever I was borne,
 Spaking my selfe unto the world a scoone:
 And to my friends and kindred all a shame,
 Blotting their blood by my unhappy name.

Wits a Gentleman of wealth and fame,
 (One *Spaster Arden*, he was call'd by name)
 I wedded with isy and great content,
 A living at *Feuerham* in famous Kent.

In love we liv'd, and great tranquillity,
 Untill I came in *Mosbie*'s company,
 Whose sugred tongue, good shape, and lovely looks,
 Dons won my heart, and *Arden*'s love forsooke.

And living thus in foule adultery,
 Wad in my husband cause of iralousie,
 And lest the world our actions should betray,
 Wee did consent to take his life away.

To London faire my Husband was to ride,
 But ere he went I payson did provide,
 Got of a painter which I promised
 That *Mosbie* after Susan he should wed.

Into his Wozth I then did put the same,
 He lik't it not when to the boord it came,
 Saying, There's something in it is not for *me*,
 At which inrag'd, I flung it on the ground.

Yet ere he went, his man I did comure,
 Ere they came home, to make his *Spaster* sure,
 And murder him, and for his faith and paine,
 Susan, and Roze of gold that he should gaine.

Yet I misdoubting *Michael*'s constancy,
 Knowing a Neighbour that was dwelling by,
 Which, to my husband bore no great good will,
 ought to incense him his deare blood to spill.

His name was *Greene*; *Spaster Greene* (quoth I)
 My husband to you hath done injury,
 For which I forry am with all my heart,
 And how he wrongeth me I will impart.

He keeps abroad most wicked company,
 With whores and queanes, and bad society;
 When he comes home, he beats me sides and head,
 That I am with that one of he were dead.

And now to London he is rid to roare,
 I would that I might never see him more:
Greene then incens'd, did vow to be my friend,
 And of his life he some would make an end.

Spaster Greene, said I, the dangers great,
 You must be circumspect to doe this feat;
 To at the deed your selfe there is no need,
 But hire some Villaines, they will doe the deed.

Ten pounds he gave them to attempt this thing,
 And twenty more when certaine netes they bring,
 That he is dead, besides he be your friend,
 In honest court teile till life both end.

Greene vow'd to doe it; then away he went,
 And met two Villaines, that did live in Kent
 To rob and murder upon *Shooters hill*,
 The one call'd *Shakebag*, t'other nam'd *Black Will*.

Two such like Villaines *Hell* did never hatch,
 For twenty Angels they made by the match,
 And forty more when they had done the deed,
 Which made them sweare, they'd do it with all speed.

Then up to London presently they hie,
 Where *Spaster Arden* in *Pauls Church* they spy,
 And waiting for his coming forth that night,
 By a strange chance of him they then lost sight.

For where these Villaines stood & made their stay
 A *Wentice* he was shutting up his shop,
 The window falling, light on *Blacke-Will*'s head,
 And broke it soundly, that apace it bled.

Where straight he made a babble and a ryle,
 And my sweet *Arden* he pass by the while;
 They misting him, another plot did lay,
 And meeting *Michael*, thus to him they say:

Thou knowst that we must packe thy *Spaster* hence
 Therfore consent and further our pretence,
 At night when as your *Spaster* goes to bed,
 Leane ape the doozes, he shall be murdered.

And so he did, yet *Arden* could not sleepe,
 Strange dreames and visions in his senses creape,
 He dreamt the doozes were ape, & Villaines came,
 To murder him, my twas the very same.

The second part.

To the same tune.

He rose and that the day, his man he blames,
Which cunningly he strait this answer frames;
I was to sleep, that I did forget
To locke the doores, I pray you pardon it.

Nert day these Ruffians met this man againe,
Who the whole story to them did expaine,
My master will in towne no longer stay,
To morrow you may meete him on the way.

Nert day his business being finished,
He did take horse, and homeward then he rid.
And as he rid, it was his day as then,
To overtake Lord Cheiney and his men.

With salutations they each other greet.
I am full glad your Honour for to meet,
Arden did say: then did the Lord reply,
Sir, I am glad of your good company.

And being that the homeward are to ride,
I have a suite that must not be denied.
That at my house you will stay, and lodge also,
To Faversham this night you must not goe.

Then Arden answered with this courteous speech,
Your Honours pardon now I was desech,
I made a vow, if God did give me life,
To stay and lodge with Alice my loving wife.

Well, said my Lord, your oath hath got the day,
To morrow come and dine with me, I pray.
He went upon your Honour then (said he)
And safe he went amongst this company.

On Raymon Downe, as they did passe this way,
Black-will, and Shakebag they in ambush lay,
But durst not touch him, cause of the great traine
That my Lord had: thus were they cross againe.

With heereid oathes these Ruffians gan to sweare,
They stamp and curse, and toze their locks of haire
Saying, some Angell surely him did keepe,
Yet howe to murder him ere they did sleepe.

Now all this while my husband was away,
Mosby and I did revell night and day;
And Susan, which my waiting maiden was,
My Lones owne sister, knewe howe all did passe.

But when I saw my Arden was not dead,
I welcom'd him, but with a heavy head:
He had he went, and slept secure from harmes,
But I did with my Mosby in my armes.

Yet ere he slept, he told me he must goe
To dinner to my Lords, hee'd banke it so;
And that same night Blacke-will did send me word,
What lucke had fortune did to them afford.

I sent him word, that he nert day should dine
At the Lords Cheinies, and should ride betwixt him,
And on the way their purpose might fulfill,
Well, he returned you, when that you him kill.

Nert morrow betimes, before the break of day,
To take him napping then they take their way;
But such a mist and fog there did arise,
They could not see although they had eyes.

Thus Arden scap'd these villaines where
And yet they heard his horse goe by that way,
I thinke (said Will) some spirit is his friend,
Come life or death, I doe to see his end.

Then to my house they strait did take their way,
Telling me how they missed of their pray:
Then presently, we did together gae,
At night at home that he should murdered be.

Mosby and I, and all, our plot thus lay,
That by at Tables should with Arden play,
Black-will, and Shakebag they themselves should hide
Untill that Mosby be a watchword crye.

The word was this whereon we did agree,
Now (quoth Arden) I have taken ye:
Woe to that word, and woe unto his ail,
Which had confusion and our sudde fall.

When he came home, most welcome him I made;
And ridas like I kiss whom I betraide,
Mosby and he together went to play,
For I on purpose did the tables lay.

And as they playd, the word was straightway spoke,
Blacke-will and Shakebag out the corner broke,
And with a Towell backwards pul'd him downe,
Which made me think they now my loves did crowne.

With swordes and knives they stab'd him in the heart,
Mosby and I did likewise set our part,
And then his body straight we did convey
Behind the Abbey in the field he lay.

And then by Justice we were straight condemn'd;
Each of us came unto a shamelesse end,
For God our secret dealing's soon did spy,
And brought to light our shamefull villany.

Thus have you heard of Ardens tragedy,
It tells to show you how the rest did die:
His wife at Canterbury she was burnt,
And all her flesh and bones to ashes turn'd.

Mosby and his faire sister, they were brought
To London for the trespasses they had wrought,
In Smithfield on a gibbet they did die,
A just reward for all their villanie.

Michael and Bradshaw, which a Goldsmith was,
What knew of letters which from them did passe,
At Faversham were hanged both in chains,
And well rewarded for their faithfull paines.

The painter fled none knowes how he did speed,
Shakebag in Southwarke he to death did bleed,
For as he thought to scape and ran away,
He suddenly was murdered in a fray.

In Kent at Osbridge, Greene did suffer death;
Hang'd on a gibbet he did lose his breath:
Blacke-will at Flushing on a stage did burne,
Thus each one came unto his end by turne.

And thus my story I conclude and end,
Saying the Lord that he his grace will send
Upon us all, and keepe us all from ill,
Amen say all, let be thy blessed will.